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TO ALL FRIENDS AND KINSFOLK

IN

THE AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH,

This Drama is Dedicated

WITH AFFECTION AND RESPECT.

London,
Sept. 28, 1868.

PREFACE.

MANY years ago this Drama was re-written from an earlier play by the same Author, called "The Sea Captain," the first idea of which was suggested by a striking situation in a novel by M. A. Dumas (*Le Capitaine Paul*). The Author withdrew "The Sea Captain" from the stage (and even from printed publication), while it had not lost such degree of favour as the admirable acting of Mr. Macready chiefly contributed to obtain for it; intending to replace it before the public with some important changes in the histrionic cast, and certain slight alterations in the conduct of the story. But the alterations once commenced, became so extensive in character, diction, and even in revision of plot, that a new play gradually rose from the foundations of the old one. The task thus undertaken, being delayed by other demands upon time and thought, was scarcely completed when Mr. Macready's retirement from his profession suspended the Author's literary connection with the stage, and "The Rightful Heir" has remained in tranquil seclusion till this year, when he submits his appeal to the proper tribunal;—sure, that if he fail of a favourable hearing, it will not be the fault of the friends who take part in his cause and act in his behalf.

LONDON,
Sept. 28, 1868.

LESSEE, MR. E. T. SMITH.

THE PLAY,

Produced by MR. E. T. SMITH, and MR. T. H. FRIEND,
Stage Manager.

The Scenery by Messrs. CHARLES and WILLIAM BREW.

Time of performance, under three hours.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD BEAUFORT, *Son to Lady Montreville* . . MR. NEVILLE.

SIR GREY DE MALPAS, *the poor cousin, distantly connected to Lady Montreville, but next in succession to the earldom, on failure of the direct line* . . MR. HERMANN VEZIN.

WRECKLYFFE, *a disinherited and ruined gentleman—who, after a vicious and lawless career on land, has turned pirate* . . . . . MR. LAWLOR.

SIR GODFREY SEYMOUR, *a justice of the peace* . . MR. GEORGE PEEL.

VYVYAN, *the captain of the* Dreadnought, *a privateer* MR. BANDMANN.

FALKNER, *Vyvyan's first lieutenant and friend* . . MR. LIN RAYNE.

HARDING, *Vyvyan's second lieutenant* . . . . MR. T. ANDERSON.

MARSDEN, *seneschal to Lady Montreville* . . . MR. DAVID EVANS.

ALTON, *a village priest* . . . . . MR. BASIL POTTER.

A SUB-OFFICER on board the *Dreadnought* . . MR. EVERARD.

Servants, Sailors, Clerk, and Halberdiers attendant on Sir Godfrey.

LADY MONTREVILLE, *a countess in her own right* . MRS. H. VEZIN.

EVELINE, *her ward—distantly related to her, and betrothed to Vyvyan* . . . . . MISS M. PALMER.

TIME OCCUPIED.—*In the first four acts, one day. Between the 4th and 5th acts the interval of a year. Time supposed to be occupied by the events in the 5th act, little more than that required for representation on the stage.*

DATE OF THE PLAY.—*In the first four acts, July* 1588—*the year of the Armada. The 5th act, the Summer of* 1589.

*** There are a few omissions and verbal alterations in the Stage representation of the Play: but they are too slight to require special notice in the printed text.

NOTE.

"THE Spanish Armada was ready in the beginning of May, but the moment it was preparing to sail, the Marquis of Santa Croce, the Admiral, was seized with a fever, of which he soon after died. . . . At last the Spanish fleet, full of hope and alacrity, set sail from Lisbon May 29th, but next day met with a violent tempest, which scattered the ships—sunk some of the smallest, and forced the rest to take shelter in the Groyne, where they waited till they could be re-fitted. When news of this event was carried to England, the Queen concluded that the design of an invasion was disappointed for the summer, and, being always ready to lay hold on every pretence for saving money, she made Walsingham write to the Admiral, directing him to lay up some of the larger ships, and to discharge the seamen. But Lord Effingham, who was not so sanguine in his hopes, used the freedom to disobey these orders, and he begged leave to retain all the ships in service, though it should be at his own expense. . . . .

"Meanwhile, all the damages of the Armada were repaired, and the Spaniards, with fresh hopes, set out again to sea."—*Hume.*

THE RIGHTFUL HEIR.

ACT I.

SCENE 1. *In the foreground the house of* SIR GREY DE MALPAS, *small and decayed, the casements broken, &c. Ruins around, as if the present house were but the remains of some more stately edifice of great antiquity. In the background, a view of the sea. On a height at some little distance, the castle of Montreville, the sun full upon its turrets and gilded vanes.*

N.B. The scene to be so contrived that the grandeur of the castle and the meanness of the ruin be brought into conspicuous contrast.

SIR GREY *at work on a patch of neglected garden ground, throws down his spade and advances.*

Sir G. I cannot dig! Fie, what a helpless thing
Is the white hand of well-born poverty!
And yet between this squalor and that pomp
Stand but two lives, a woman's and a boy's—
But two frail lives. I may outlive them both.

Enter WRECKLYFFE.

Wreck. Ay, that's the house—the same; the master changed,
But less than I am. Winter creeps on him,
Lightning hath stricken me. Good day.
Sir G. Pass on.
No spendthrift hospitable fool spreads here
The board for strangers. Pass.
Wreck. Have years so dimmed
Eyes once so keen, De Malpas?
Sir G. (*after a pause.*) Ha! Thy hand.
What brings thee hither?
Wreck. 'Brings me?' say 'hurls back.'
First, yellow pestilence, whose ghastly wings
Guard, like the fabled griffin, India's gold;

Unequal battle next; then wolfish famine;
And lastly, storm (rough welcome home to England)
Swept decks from stern to stem: to shore was flung
A lonely pirate on a battered hulk!
One wreck rots stranded;—you behold the other.
Sir G. Penury hath still its crust and roof-tree—share them.
Time has dealt hardly with us both, since first
We two made friendship—thou straight-limbed, well-favoured,
Stern-hearted, disinherited dare-devil!
Wreck. And thou?——
Sir G. A stroke paints me. My lord's poor cousin.
How strong thou wert, yet I could twist and wind thee
Round these slight hands;—that is the use of brains!
Wreck. Still jokes and stings?
Sir G. Still a poor cousin's weapons.
Wreck. Boast brains, yet starve?
Sir G. Still a poor cousin's fate, sir.
Pardon my brains, since oft thy boasts they pardoned;
(Sad change since then), when rufflers aped thy swagger,
And village maidens sighed and, wondering, asked
Why heaven made men so wicked—and so comely.
Wreck. 'Sdeath! Wilt thou cease?
Sir. G.. That scar upon thy front
Bespeaks grim service.
Wreck. In thy cause, de Malpas;
The boy, whom at thine instance I allured
On board my bark, left me this brand of Cain.
Sir G. That boy——
Wreck. Is now a man—and on these shores.
This morn I peered from yonder rocks that hid me,
And saw his face. I whetted then this steel:
Need'st thou his death? In me behold Revenge!
Sir G. He lives!—he lives! There is a third between
The beggar and the earldom!
Wreck. Steps and voices!
When shall we meet alone? Hush, it is he!
Sir G. He with the plume?
Wreck. Ay.
Sir G. Quick; within.
Wreck. And thou?

Sir G. I dig the earth ; see the grave-digger's tool.

[*Exit* WRECKLYFFE *within the house.*

Enter HARDING *and* Sailors.

Hard. Surely 'twas here the captain bade us meet him
While he went forth for news ?

1*st Sailor.* He comes.

Enter VYVYAN.

Hard. Well, captain,
What tidings of the Spaniards' armament ?

Vyv. Bad, for they say the fighting is put off,
And storm in Biscay driven back the Dons.
This is but rumour—we will learn the truth.
Harding, take horse and bear these lines to Drake—
If yet our country needs stout hearts to guard her,
He'll not forget the men on board the Dreadnought.
Thou canst be back ere sunset with his answer,
And find me in yon towers of Montreville.

[*Exit* HARDING.

Meanwhile make merry in the hostel, lads,
And drink me out these ducats in this toast :—
" No foes be tall eno' to wade the moat
Which girds the fort whose only walls are men."

[Sailors *cheer, and exeunt.*

Vyv. I never hailed reprieve from war till now.
Heaven grant but time to see mine Eveline,
And learn my birth from Alton.

Enter FALKNER.

Falk. Captain.

Vyv. Falkner !
So soon returned ? Thy smile seems fresh from home.
All well there ?

Falk. Just in time to make all well.
My poor old father !—bailiffs at his door ;
He tills another's land, and crops had failed.
I poured mine Indian gold into his lap,
And cried, " O father, wilt thou now forgive
The son who went to sea against thy will ? "

Vyv. And he forgave.—Now tell me of thy mother;

I never knew one, but I love to mark
The quiver of a strong man's bearded lip
When his voice lingers on the name of mother.
Thy mother bless'd thee——
Falk. Yes, I—— (*Falters and turns aside.*)
Pshaw! methought
Her joy was weeping on my breast again!
Vyv. I envy thee those tears.
Falk. Eno' of me!
Now for thyself. What news? Thy fair betrothed—
The maid we rescued from the turbaned corsair
With her brave father in the Indian seas—
Found and still faithful?
Vyv. Faithful, I will swear it;
But not yet found. Her sire is dead—the stranger
Sits at his hearth—and with her next of kin,
Hard by this spot—yea, in yon sunlit towers,
Mine Eveline dwells.
Falk. Thy foster father, Alton,
Hast thou seen him?
Vyv. Not yet. My Falkner, serve me.
His house is scarce a two hours' journey hence,
The nearest hamlet will afford a guide;
Seek him and break the news of my return,
Say I shall see him ere the day be sped.
And, hearken, friend (good men at home are apt
To judge us sailors harshly), tell him this—
On the far seas his foster son recalled
Prayers taught by age to childhood, and implored
Blessings on that grey head. Farewell! Now, Eveline.

[*Exeunt, severally,* VYVYAN *and* FALKNER.

Sir G. (*advancing.*) Thou seekest those towers—go. I will meet thee there.
He must not see the priest—the hour is come
Absolving Alton's vow to guard the secret;
Since the boy left, two 'scutcheons moulder o'er
The dust of tombs from which his rights ascend;
He must not see the priest—but how forestall him?—
Within! For there dwells Want, Wit's counsellor,
Harbouring grim Force, which is Ambition's tool.

[*Exit* SIR GREY.

SCENE 2. *The gardens of the castle of Montreville, laid out in the formal style of the times. Parterres sunk deep in beds of arabesque design. The gardens are enclosed within an embattled wall, which sinks, here and there, into low ornamented parapets, over which the eye catches a glimpse of the sea, which is immediately below. A postern gate in the wall is open, through which descends a flight of steps, hewn out of the cliff.*

Enter LADY MONTREVILLE.

Lady M. This were his birthday, were he living still!
But the wide ocean is his winding sheet,
And his grave—here! (*Pressing her hand to her heart.*) I dreamed of him last night!
Peace! with the dead, died shame and glozing slander;
In the son left me still, I clasp a world
Of blossoming hopes which flower beneath my love,
And take frank beauty from the flattering day.
And——but my Clarence!—in his princely smile
How the air brightens!

Enter LORD BEAUFORT, *speaking to* MARSDEN.

Lord B. Yes, my gallant roan,
And, stay—be sure the falcon, which my lord
Of Leicester sent me; we will try its metal.
Mars. Your eyes do bless him, madam, so do mine:
A gracious spring; Heaven grant we see its summer!
Forgive, dear lady, your old servant's freedom.
Lady M. Who loves him best, with me ranks highest, Marsden.

[*Exit* MARSDEN.

Clarence, you see me not.
Lord B. Dear mother, welcome.
Why do I miss my soft-eyed cousin here?
Lady M. It doth not please me, son, that thou should'st haunt
Her steps, and witch with dulcet words her ear.
Eveline is fair, but not the mate for Beaufort.
Lord B. Mate! Awful word! Can youth not gaze on beauty
Save by the torch of Hymen? To be gallant,
Melt speech in sighs, or murder sense in sonnets;
Veer with each change in Fancy's April skies,

And o'er each sun-shower fling its fleeting rainbow.
All this——

Lady M. (*gloomily.*) Alas, is love.

Lord B. No! Love's light prologue,
The sportive opening to the serious drama;
The pastime practice of Dan Cupid's bow,
Against that solemn venture at the butts
At which fools make so many random shafts,
And rarely hit the white! Nay, smile, my mother;
How does this plume become me?

Lady M. Foolish boy!
It sweeps too loosely.

Lord B. Now-a-days, man's love
Is worn as loosely as I wear this plume—
A glancing feather stirred with every wind
Into new shadows o'er a giddy brain
Such as your son's. Let the plume play, sweet mother!

Lady M. Would I could chide thee!

Lord B. Hark, I hear my steed
Neighing impatience; and my falcon frets
Noon's lazy air with lively silver bells;
Now, madam, look to it—no smile from me
When next we meet,—no kiss of filial duty,
Unless my fair-faced cousin stand beside you,
Blushing 'Peccavi' for all former sins—
Shy looks, cold words, this last unnatural absence,
And taught how cousins should behave to cousins.

[*Exit* LORD BEAUFORT.

Lady M. Trifler! And yet the faults that quicken fear
Make us more fond—we parents love to pardon.

Enter EVELINE, *weaving flowers—not seeing* LADY MONTREVILLE.

Evel. (*Sings*)—

Bud from the blossom,
And leaf from the tree,
Guess why in weaving
I sing "Woe is me!"—

'Tis that I weave you
To drift on the sea,
And say, when ye find him,
Who sang "Woe is me!"—

[*Casts the flowers, woven into a garland, over the parapet, and advances.*

Lady M. A quaint but mournful rhyme.
Evel. You, madam !—pardon !
Lady M. What tells the song ?
Evel. A simple village tale
Of a lost seaman, and a crazëd girl,
His plighted bride—good Marsden knew her well,
And oft-times marked her singing on the beach,
Then launch her flowers, and smile upon the sea.
I know not why—both rhyme and tale do haunt me.
Lady M. Sad thoughts haunt not young hearts, thou senseless child.
Evel. Is not the child an orphan ?
Lady M. In those eyes
Is there no moisture softer than the tears
Which mourn a father ? Roves thy glance for Beaufort ?
Vain girl, beware ! The flattery of the great
Is but the eagle's swoop upon the dove,
And, in descent, destroys.
Evel. Can you speak thus,
Yet bid me grieve not that I am an orphan ?
[*Retires up the garden.*
Lady M. (*to herself.*) I have high dreams for Beaufort ; bright desires !
Son of a race whose lives shine down on Time
From lofty tombs, like beacon-towers o'er ocean,
He stands amidst the darkness of my thought,
Radiant as Hope in some lone captive's cell.
Far from the gloom around, mine eyes, inspired,
Pierce to the future, when these bones are dust,
And see him loftiest of the lordly choirs
Whose swords and coronals blaze around the throne,
The guardian stars of the imperial isle—
Kings shall revere his mother.

Enter SIR GREY, *speaking to* Servant.

Sir G. What say'st thou ?
Servant (*insolently.*) Sir Grey—ha ! ha !—Lord Beaufort craves your pardon,
He shot your hound—its bark disturbed the deer.
Sir G. The only voice that welcomed me ! A dog—
Grudges he that ?

Servant. Oh sir, 'twas done in kindness
To you and him ; the dog was wondrous lean, sir !
Sir G. I thank my lord.

[*Exit* Servant.

So, my poor Tray is killed !
And yet *that* dog but barked—can *this* not bite ?

[*Approaches* LADY MONTREVILLE *vindictively, and in a whisper—*

He lives !
Lady M. He ! who ?
Sir G. The heir of Montreville !
Another, and an elder Beaufort, lives !
(*Aside.*) So—the fang fixes fast—good—good !
Lady M. Thou saidst
Ten years ago—"Thy first-born is no more—
Died in far seas."
Sir G. So swore my false informant.
But now, the deep that took the harmless boy
Casts from its breast the bold-eyed daring man.
Lady M. Clarence ! My poor proud Clarence !
Sir G. Ay, *poor* Clarence !
True ; since his father, by his former nuptials
Had other sons, if you, too, own an elder,
Clarence is poor—as poor as his poor cousin.
Ugh ! but the air is keen, and Poverty
Is thinly clad ; subject to rheums and agues (*shivers*),
Asthma and phthisis (*coughs*), pains in the loins and limbs,
And leans upon a crutch, like your poor cousin.
If Poverty begs, Law sets it in the stocks ;
If it is ill, the doctors mangle it ;
If it is dying, the priests scold at it ;
And, when 'tis dead, rich kinsmen cry, "Thank heaven ! "
Ah ! if the elder prove his rights, dear lady,
Your younger son will know what's poverty !
Lady M. Malignant, peace ! why dost thou torture me ?
The priest who shares alone with us the secret
Hath sworn to guard it.
Sir G. Only while thy sire
And second lord survived. Yet, what avails
In law his tale, unbacked by thy confession ?

Lady M. All! He hath proofs, clear proofs. Thrice woe to Clarence!

Sir G. Proofs—written proofs?

Lady M. Of marriage, and the birth!

Sir G. Wherefore so long was this concealed from me?

Lady M. Thou wert my father's agent, Grey de Malpas,
Not my familiar.

Sir G. Here, then, ends mine errand.

Lady M. Stay, sir—forgive my rash and eager temper;
Stay, stay, and counsel me. What! sullen still?
Needëst thou gold?—befriend, and find me grateful.

Sir G. Lady of Montreville, I ence was young,
And pined for gold, to wed the maid I loved:
Your father said, "Poor cousins should not marry,"
And gave that sage advice in lieu of gold.
A few years later, and I grew ambitious,
And longed for wars and fame, and foolish honours:
Then I lacked gold, to join the knights, mine equals,
As might become a Malpas and your kinsman:
Your father said he had need of his poor cousin
At home, to be his huntsman, and his falconer!

Lady M. Forgetful! After my first fatal nuptials
And their sad fruit, count you as nought——

Sir G. My hire!
For service and for silence; not a gift.

Lady M. And spent in riot, waste, and wild debauch!

Sir G. True; in the pauper's grand inebriate wish
To know what wealth is,—tho' but for an hour.

Lady M. But blame you me or mine, if spendthrift wassail
Run to the dregs? Mine halls stand open to you;
My noble Beaufort hath not spurned your converse;
You have been welcomed——

Sir G. At your second table,
And as the butt of unchastisëd lackeys;
While your kind son, in pity of my want,
Hath this day killed the faithful dog that shared it.
'Tis well; you need my aid, as did your father,
And tempt, like him, with gold. I take the service;
And, when the task is done, will talk of payment.
Hist! the boughs rustle. Closer space were safer;
Vouchsafe your hand, let us confer within.

Lady M. Well might I dream last night! A fearful dream.

[*Exeunt* LADY MONTREVILLE *and* SIR GREY.

Re-enter EVELINE.

Evel. O, for some fairy talisman to conjure
Up to these longing eyes the form they pine for!
And yet, in love, there's no such word as absence;
The loved one glides beside our steps for ever;
Its presence gave such beauty to the world,
That all things beautiful its tokens are,
And aught in sound most sweet, to sight most fair,
Breathes with its voice, and haunts us with its aspect.

Enter VYVYAN *through the postern gate.*

There spoke my fancy, not my heart! Where art thou,
My unforgotten Vyvyan?

Vyv. At thy feet!
Look up—look up!—these are the arms that sheltered
When the storm howled around; and these the lips
Where, till this hour, the sad and holy kiss
Of parting lingered, as the fragrance left
By angels, when they touch the earth and vanish.
Look up; night never hungered for the sun
As for thine eyes my soul!

Evel. Oh! joy, joy, joy!

Vyv. Yet weeping still, tho' leaning on my breast!
My sailor's bride, hast thou no voice but blushes?
Nay from those drooping roses let me steal
The coy reluctant sweetness!

Evel. And, methought
I had treasured words, 'twould take a life to utter
When we should meet again!

Vyv. Recall them later.
We shall have time eno', when life with life
Blends into one;—why dost thou start and tremble?

Evel. Methought I heard her slow and solemn footfall!

Vyv. Her! Why, thou speak'st of woman: the meek word
Which never chimes with terror.

Evel. You know not
The dame of Montreville.

Vyv. Is she so stern?

Evel. Not stern, but haughty; as if high-born virtue
Swept o'er the earth to scorn the faults it pardoned.
Vyv. Haughty to thee?
Evel. To all, ev'n when the kindest;
Nay, I do wrong her; never to her son;
And when those proud eyes moisten as they hail him,
Hearts lately stung, yearn to a heart so human!
Alas, that parent love! how in its loss
All life seems shelterless!
Vyv. Like thee, perchance,
Looking round earth for that same parent shelter,
I too may find but tombs. So, turn we both,
Orphans, to that lone parent of the lonely,
That doth like Sorrow ever upward gaze
On calm consoling stars—the mother Sea.
Evel. Call not the cruel sea by that mild name.
Vyv. She is not cruel if her breast swell high
Against the winds that thwart her loving aim
To link, by every raft whose course she speeds,
Man's common brotherhood from pole to pole;
Grant she hath danger—danger schools the brave,
And bravery leaves all cruel things to cowards.
Grant that she harden us to fear,—the hearts
Most proof to fear are easiest moved to love,
As on the oak whose roots defy the storm,
All the leaves tremble when the south-wind stirs.
Yet if the sea dismay thee, on the shores
Kissed by her waves, and far, as fairy isles
In poet dreams, from this grey care-worn world,
Blooms many a bower for the Sea Rover's bride.
I know a land where feathering palm-trees shade
To delicate twilight, suns benign as those
Whose dawning gilded Eden;—Nature, there,
Like a gay spendthrift in his flush of youth,
Flings her whole treasure on the lap of Time.
There, steeped in roseate hues, the lakelike sea
Heaves to an air whose breathing is ambrosia;
And, all the while, bright-winged and warbling birds,
Like happy souls released, melodious float
Thro' blissful light, and teach the ravished earth

How joy finds voice in Heaven. Come, rest we yonder,
And, side by side, forget that we are orphans!

[VYVYAN *and* EVELINE *retire up the stage.*

Enter LADY MONTREVILLE *and* SIR GREY.

Lady M. Yet still, if Alton sees——
Sir G. Without the proofs,
Why, Alton's story were but idle wind;
The man I send is swift and strong, and ere
This Vyvyan (who would have been here before me
But that I took the shorter path) depart
From your own threshold to the priest's abode,
Our agent gains the solitary dwelling,
And——
Lady M. But no violence!
Sir G. Nay, none but fear—
Fear will suffice to force from trembling age
Your safety, and preserve your Beaufort's birthright.
Lady M. Let me not hear the ignominious means;
Gain thou the end;—quick—quick!
Sir G. And if, meanwhile,
This sailor come, be nerved to meet—a stranger;
And to detain—a guest.
Lady M. My heart is wax,
But my will, iron—go.
Sir G. (*aside.*) To fear add force—
And this hand closes on the proofs, and welds
That iron to a tool.

[*Exit* SIR GREY.

Re-enter VYVYAN *and* EVELINE.

Evel. Nay, Vyvyan—nay,
Your guess can fathom not how proud her temper.
Vyv. Tut for her pride! a king upon the deck
Is every subject's equal in the hall.
I will advance. (*He uncovers.*)
Lady M. Avenging angels, spare me!
Vyv. Pardon the seeming boldness of my presence.
Evel. Our gallant countryman, of whom my father
So often spake—who from the Algerine
Rescued our lives and freedom.
Lady M. Ah! Your name, sir?

Vyv. The name I bear is Vyvyan, noble lady.
Lady M. Sir, you are welcome. Walk within, and hold
Our home your hostel, while it lists you.
Vyv. Madam,
I shall be prouder in all after time
For having been your guest.
Lady M. How love and dread
Make tempest here! I pray you follow me.

[*Exit* LADY MONTREVILLE.

Vyv. A most majestic lady—her fair face
Made my heart tremble, and called back old dreams:
Thou saidst she had a son?
Evel. Ah, yes.
Vyv. In truth
A happy man.
Evel. Yet he might envy thee:
Vyv. Most arch reprover, yes. As kings themselves
Might envy one whose arm entwines his all.

[*Exeunt* EVELINE *and* VYVYAN.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE 1. *A Gothic chamber. On one side a huge hearth, over which an armorial scutcheon and an earl's coronet, boldly carved. The walls covered with old portraits—tall beaufets in recesses filled with goblets and other vessels of silver. An open door admits a view of a cloister, and the alleys in the courtyard without.*

A table spread with fruits and wines, at which are seated LADY MONTREVILLE, VYVYAN, *and* EVELINE.

Vyv. Ha! ha! In truth we made a scurvy figure
After our shipwreck.
Lady M. You jest merrily
On your misfortunes.
Vyv. 'Tis the way with sailors:
Still in extremes. I can be sad sometimes.
Lady M. That sigh, in truth, speaks sadness. Sir, if I
In aught could serve you, trust me.
Evel. Trust her, Vyvyan.
Methinks the mournful tale of thy young years
Would raise thee up a friend, wherever pity
Lives in the heart of woman.
Vyv. Gentle lady,
The key of some charmed music in your voice
Unlocks a haunted chamber in my soul;
And—would you listen to an outcast's tale,—
'Tis briefly told. Until my fifteenth year,
Beneath the roof of a poor village priest,
Not far from hence, my childhood wore away;
Then stirred within me restless thoughts and deep;—
Throughout the liberal and harmonious nature
Something seemed absent,—what, I scarcely knew,
Till one calm night, when over slumbering seas
Watched the still heaven, and down on every wave
Looked some soft lulling star—the instinctive want
Learned what it pined for; and I asked the priest
With a quick sigh—"Why I was motherless?"

Lady M. And he ?—

Vyv. Replied that—I was nobly born,
And that the cloud which dimmed a dawning sun,
Oft but foretold its splendour at the noon.
As thus he spoke, faint memories struggling came—
Faint as the things some former life hath known.

Lady M. Of what ?

Vyv. A face sweet with a stately sorrow,
And lips which breathed the words that mothers murmur.

Lady M. (*aside.*) Back, tell-tale tears !

Vyv. About that time, a stranger
Came to our hamlet ; rough, yet, some said, well-born;
Roysterer, and comrade, such as youth delights in.
Sailor he called himself, and nought belied
The sailor's metal ringing in his talk
Of El Dorados, and Enchanted Isles,
Of hardy Raleigh, and of dauntless Drake,
And great Columbus with prophetic eyes
Fixed on a dawning world. His legends fired me—
And, from the deep whose billows washed our walls,
The alluring wave called with a Siren's music.
And thus I left my home with that wild seaman.

Lady M. The priest, consenting, still divulged not more ?

Vyv. No ; nor rebuked mine ardour. "Go," he said,
"The noblest of all nobles are the men
In whom their country feels herself ennobled."

Lady M. (*aside.*) I breathe again. Well, thus you left these shores——

Vyv. Scarce had the brisker sea-wind filled our sails,
When the false traitor who had lured my trust
Cast me to chains and darkness. Days went by,
At length—one belt of desolate waters round,
And on the decks one scowl of swarthy brows,
(A hideous crew, the refuse of all shores)—
Under the flapping of his raven flag
The pirate stood revealed, and called his captive.
Grimly he heard my boyish loud upbraidings,
And grimly smiled in answering : "I, like thee,
Cast off, and disinherited, and desperate,
Had but one choice, death or the pirate's flag—
Choose *thou*—I am more gracious than thy kindred ;

I proffer life ; the gold *they* gave me paid
Thy grave in ocean ! "
Lady M. Hold ! The demon lied !
Vyv. Swift, as I answered so, his blade flashed forth ;
But self-defence is swifter still than slaughter ;
I plucked a sword from one who stood beside me,
And smote the slanderer to my feet. Then all
That human hell broke loose ; oaths rang, steel lightened ;
When in the death-swoon of the caitiff chief,
The pirate next in rank forced back the swarm,
And—in that superstition of the sea
Which makes the sole religion of its outlaws—
Forbade my doom by bloodshed—griped and bound me
To a slight plank ; spread to the winds the sail,
And left me on the waves alone with God.
Evel. Pause. Let my hand take thine — feel its warm life,
And, shuddering less, thank Him whose eye was o'er thee.
Vyv. That day, and all that night, upon the seas
Tossed the frail barrier between life and death ;
Heaven lulled the gales ; and when the stars came forth,
All looked so bland and gentle that I wept,
Recalled that wretch's words, and murmured, " All,
Ev'n wave and wind, are kinder than my kindred ! "
But—nay, sweet lady——
Lady M. Heed me not. Night passed——
Vyv. Day dawned ; and, glittering in the sun, behold
A sail—a flag !
Evel. Well—well ?
Vyv. Like Hope, it vanished !
Noon glaring came—with noon came thirst and famine,
And with parched lips I called on death, and sought
To wrench my limbs from the stiff cords that gnawed
Into the flesh, and drop into the deep :
And then—the clear wave trembled, and below
I saw a dark, swift-moving, shapeless thing,
With watchful, glassy eyes ;—the ghastly shark
Swam hungering round its prey—then life once more
Grew sweet, and with a strained and horrent gaze
And lifted hair I floated on, till sense
Grew dim, and dimmer ; and a terrible sleep

(In which still—still—those livid eyes met mine)
Fell on me—and——
Evel. Quick—quick!
Vyv. I woke, and heard
My native tongue! Kind looks were bent upon me.
I lay on deck—escaped the ravening death—
For God had watched the sleeper.
Evel. Oh, such memories
Make earth, for ever after, nearer heaven;
And each new hour an altar for thanksgiving.
Lady M. Break not the tale my ear yet strains to listen.
Vyv. True lion of the ocean was the chief
Of that good ship. Beneath his fostering eyes,
Nor all ungraced by Drake's illustrious praise,
And the frank clasp of Raleigh's kingly hand,
I fought my way to manhood. At his death
The veteran left me a more absolute throne
Than Cæsar filled—his war-ship; for my realm
Add to the ocean, hope—and measure it!
Nameless, I took his name. My tale is done—
And each past sorrow, like a wave on shore,
Dies on this golden hour. (*Turns to* EVELINE.)
Lady M. (*observing them.*) He loves my ward,
Whom Clarence, too—that thought piles fear on fear;
Yet, hold—that very rivalship gives safety—
Affords pretext to urge the secret nuptials,
And the prompt parting, ere he meet with Alton.
I—but till Nature sobs itself to peace,
Here's that which chokes all reason. Will ye not
Taste summer air, cooled through yon shadowy alleys?
Anon I'll join you.

[*Exit* LADY MONTREVILLE.

Vyv. We will wait your leisure.
A most compassionate and courteous lady—
How couldst thou call her proud?
Evel. Nay, ever henceforth,
For the soft pity she hath shown to thee,
I'll love her as a mother.
Vyv. Thus I thank thee (*kissing her hand*).

[*Exeunt through the cloisters.*

SCENE 2. *Exterior of the castle. On one side, a terrace, with a low embattled parapet, hangs over the rock on which the castle is built, and admits a glimpse of the scene below. On another side, the ground stretches away into avenues and alleys. The castle thus seen, takes the character of a strong fortified hold.*

N. B. The scene should present the space within a vast, but irregular embattled wall, large enough to enclose trees and undulating ground. The cloister, with the door leading to LADY MONTREVILLE'S *apartment, will form part of the building, and a gate of great strength, with portcullis, &c., should form a side scene. Through this gate, as the principal portal, will enter* LORD BEAUFORT, *and, towards the end of the act,* FALKNER.

Enter SIR GREY DE MALPAS *from the terrace.*

Lord B. (*speaking without.*) A noble falcon! Marsden, hood him gently.

Enter LORD BEAUFORT.

Good day, old knight, thou hast a lowering look,
As if still ruffled by some dire affray
With lawless mice, at riot in thy larder.
Sir G. Mice in my house! magnificent dreamer, mice!
The last was found three years ago last Christmas,
Stretched out beside a bone; so lean and worn
With pious fast—'twas piteous to behold it;
I canonized its corpse in spirits of wine,
And set it in the porch—a solemn warning
To its—poor cousins! (*Aside*) Shall I be avenged?
He killed my dog too.

Enter VYVYAN *and* EVELINE, *lingering in an alley in the background.*

Lord B. Knight, look there!—A stranger,
And whispering with my cousin.
Sir G. (*aside*) Jealous? Ha!
Something should come of this: Hail, green-eyed fiend!
(*Aloud*) Let us withdraw—tho' old I have been young;
The whispered talk of lovers should be sacred.
Lord B. Lovers!
Sir G. Ah! true! You know not, in your absence
Your mother hath received a welcome guest
In your fair cousin's wooer. Note him well,
A stalwart comely gallant.
Lord B. Art thou serious?
A wooer to my cousin—quick, his name!

Sir G. His name ?—my memory doth begin to fail me—
Your mother will recall it. Seek—ask *her*——
Lord B. (*advancing*) Whom have we here? Familiar sir, excuse me,
I do not see the golden spurs of knighthood.
Vyv. Alack, we sailors have not so much gold
That we should waste it on our heels! The steeds
We ride to battle need no spurs, Sir Landsman ;
Lord B. And overleap all laws; methinks thou art
One of those wild Sea Rovers who——
Vyv. Refuse
To yield to Spain's proud tyranny, her claim
To treat as thieves and pirates all who cross
The line Spain's finger draws across God's ocean.
We, the Sea Rovers, on our dauntless decks
Carry our land, its language, laws, and freedom ;
We wrest from Spain the sceptre of the seas,
And in the New World build up a new England.
For this high task, if we fulfil it duly,
The Old and New World both shall bless the names
Of Walter Raleigh and his bold Sea Rovers.
Lord B. Of those names thine is——
Vyv. Vyvyan.
Lord B. Master Vyvyan,
Our rank scarce fits us for a fair encounter
With the loud talk of blustering mariners.
We bar you not our hospitality ;
Our converse, yes. Go, ask the Seneschal
To lodge you with your equals!
Vyv. Equals, stripling!
Mine equals truly should be bearded men,
Noble with titles carpet lords should bow to—
Memories of dangers dared, and service done,
And scars on bosoms that have bled for England!
Sir G. Nay, coz, he has thee there. (*withholding* LORD BEAUFORT.)
Thou shalt not, Clarence.
Strike *me*. I'm weak and safe—but *he* is dangerous.

Enter LADY MONTREVILLE *from the cloister as* LORD BEAUFORT *breaks from* SIR GREY *and draws his sword.*

Evel. Protect your guest from your rash son.

Lady M. Thy sword
Drawn on thy—— Back, boy! I command thee, back!
To you, sir guest, have I in aught so failed,
That in the son you would rebuke the mother?
Vyv. Madam, believe, my sole offence was this,
That rated as a serf, I spoke as man.
Lady M. Wherefore, Lord Beaufort, such unseemly humours?
Lord B. (*drawing her aside*) Wherefore?—and while we speak, his touch profanes her!
Who is this man? Dost thou approve his suit?
Beware!
Lady M. You would not threaten——Oh, my Clarence,
Hear me—you——
Lord B. Learned in childhood from my mother
To brook no rival—and to curb no passion.
Aid'st thou yon scatterling against thy son,
Where most his heart is set?
Lady M. Thy heart, perverse one?
Thou saidst it was not love.
Lord B. That was before
A rival made it love—nay, fear not, mother,
If you dismiss this insolent;—but, mark me,
Dismiss him straight, or, by mine honour, madam,
Blood will be shed.
Lady M. Thrice miserable boy!
Let the heavens hear thee not!
Lord B. (*whispering as he passes* VYVYAN) Again, and soon, sir!
[*Exit* LORD BEAUFORT.
Lady M. (*seeing* SIR GREY) Villain!—but no, I dare not yet upbraid ——
(*Aloud*) After him, quick! Appease, soothe, humour him.
Sir G. Ay, madam, trust to your poor cousin.
[*Exit* SIR GREY.
Lady M. Eveline,
Thou lov'st this Vyvyan?
Evel. Lady—I—he saved
My life and honour.
Lady M. Leave us, gentle child,
I would confer with him. May both be happy!
Evel. (*to* VYVYAN). Hush! she consents; well mayst thou bid me love her. [*Exit* EVELINE.

Lady M. Sir, if I gather rightly from your speech,
You do not mean long sojourn on these shores?
Vyv. Lady, in sooth, mine errand here was two-fold.
First, to behold, and, if I dare assume
That you will ratify her father's promise,
To claim my long affianced; next, to learn
If Heaven vouchsafe me yet a parent's heart.
I gained these shores to hear of war and danger—
The long-suspended thunderbolt of Spain
Threatened the air. I have despatched an envoy
To mine old leader, Drake, to crave sure tidings;
I wait reply: If England be in peril,
Hers my first service; if, as rumour runs,
The cloud already melts without a storm,
Then, my bride gained, and my birth tracked, I sail
Back to the Indian seas, where wild adventure
Fulfils in life what boyhood dreamed in song.
Lady M. 'Tis frankly spoken—frankly I reply.
First—England's danger: Now, for five slow years
Have Spain's dull trumpets blared their braggart war,
And Rome's grey monk-craft muttered new crusades;
Well, we live still—and all this deluge dies
In harmless spray on England's scornful cliffs.
And, trust me, sir, if war beleaguer England,
Small need of one man's valour: lacked she soldiers,
Methinks a Mars would strike in childhood's arm,
And woman be Bellona!
Vyv. Stately matron,
So would our mother country speak and look,
Could she take visible image!
Lady M. Claim thy bride
With my assent, and joyous gratulation.
She shall not go undowried to your arms.
Nor deem me wanting to herself and you
If I adjure prompt nuptials and departure.
Beaufort—thou see'st how fiery is his mood—
In my ward's lover would avenge a rival:
Indulge the impatient terrors of a mother,
And quit these shores. Why not this night?
Vyv. This night?
With her—my bride?

Lady M. So from the nuptial altar
Pledge thou thy faith to part—to spread the sail
And put wide seas between my son and thee.
Vyv. This night, with Eveline!—dream of rapture! yet—
My birth untracked——
Lady M. Delay not for a doubt
Bliss when assured. And, heed me, I have wealth
To sharpen law, and power to strengthen justice;
I will explore the mazes of this mystery;
I—I will track your parents.
Vyv. Blessed lady;
My parents—find me one with eyes like thine,
And were she lowliest of the hamlet born,
I would not change with monarchs.
Lady M. (*aside*) Can I bear this?
Your Eveline well nigh is my daughter; you
Her plighted spouse; pray you this kiss—O, sweet!

[*He sinks on his knee as she kisses his forehead.*

Vyv. Ah, as I kneel, and as thou bendest o'er me,
Methinks an angel's hand lifts up the veil
Of Time, the great magician, and I see
Above mine infant couch, a face like thine.
Lady M. Mine, stranger!
Vyv. Pardon me; a vain wild thought
I know it is; but on my faith, I think
My mother was like thee.
Lady M. Peace, peace! We talk
And fool grave hours away. Inform thy bride;
Then to thy bark, and bid thy crew prepare;
Meanwhile, I give due orders to my chaplain.
Beside the altar we shall meet once more;—
And then—and then—Heaven's blessing and farewell!

[*Exit* LADY MONTREVILLE.

Vyv. Most feeling heart! its softness hath contagion,
And melts mine own! Her aspect wears a charm
That half divides my soul with Eveline's love!
Strange! while I muse, a chill and ominous awe
Creeps thro' my veins! Away, ye vague forebodings!
Eveline! At thy dear name the phantoms vanish,

And the glad future breaks like land on sea,
When rain-mists melt beneath the golden morn.

Enter FALKNER.

Falk. Ha! Vyvyan!
Vyv. Thou!
Falk. Breathless with speed to reach thee.
I guessed thee lingering here. Thy foster sire
Hath proofs that clear the shadow from thy birth.
Go—he awaits thee where yon cloud-capt rock
Jags air with barbëd peaks—St. Kinian's Cliff.'
Vyv. My birth! My parents live?
Falk. I know no more.

Enter HARDING.

Hard. Captain, the rumour lied. I bring such news
As drums and clarions and resounding anvils
Fashioning the scythes of reapers into swords,
Shall ring from Thames to Tweed.
Vyv. The foeman comes!
Hard. (*giving letter.*) These lines will tell thee; Drake's own hand.
Vyv. (*reading.*) "The Armada
Has left the Groyne, and we are ranging battle.
Come! in the van I leave one gap for thee."
Poor Eveline! Shame on such unworthy weakness!
Falk. (*taking him aside.*) Time to see her and keep thy tryst with Alton.
Leave me to call the crews and arm the decks.
Not till the moon rise, in the second hour
After the sunset, will the deepening tide
Float us from harbour—ere that hour be past
Our ship shall wait thee by St. Kinian's Cliff.
Small need to pray thee not to miss the moment
Whose loss would lose thee honour.
Vyv. If I come not
Ere the waves reel to thy third signal gun,
Deem Death alone could so delay from duty,
And step into my post as o'er my corpse.
Falk. Justly, my captain, thou rebuk'st my warning,
And couldst thou fail us, I would hold the signal

As if thy funeral knell—crowd every sail,
And know thy soul——
Vyv. Was with my country still.
[*Shouts without.*

Enter Sub-officer, Sailors, Retainers, *and* Villagers, *confusedly.*

Sub-officer (*with broadsheet.*) Captain, look here. Just come!
Vyv. The Queen's Address
From her own lips to the armed lines at Tilbury.
Voices. Read it, sir, read it—
Vyv. Hush then (*reading*). "Loving people,
Let tyrants fear! I, under Heaven, have placed
In loyal hearts my chiefest strength and safeguard,
Being resolved in the midst and heat of the battle
To live and die amongst you all; content
To lay down for my God and for my people
My life blood even in the dust: I know
I have the body of a feeble woman,
But a King's heart, a King of England's too;
And think foul scorn that Parma, Spain, or Europe,
Dare to invade the borders of my realm!
Where England fights—with concord in the camp,
Trust in the chief, and valour in the field,
Swift be her victory over every foe
Threatening her crown, her altars and her people."

The noble Woman King! These words of fire
Will send warm blood through all the veins of Freedom
Till England is a dream! Uncover, lads!
God and St. George! Hurrah for England's Queen!

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE 1. *St. Kinian's Cliff, a wild and precipitous headland. In front the ground is broken with crags, here and there interspersed with stunted brushwood. The scene to be so contrived as to give some notion of the height of the cliff. Time, a little before sunset.*

ALTON *and* VYVYAN *seated.*

Alton. And I believed them when they said "He died
In the far seas." Ten years of desolate sorrow
Passed as one night—Now thy warm hand awakes me.

Vyv. Dear friend, the sun sets fast.

Alton. Alas! then listen.
There was a page, fair, gentle, brave, but low-born—
And in those years when, to young eyes, the world,
With all the rough disparities of fortune,
Floats level thro' the morning haze of fancy,
He loved the heiress of a lordly house:
She, scarce from childhood, listening, loved again,
And secret nuptials hallowed stolen meetings—
'Till one—I know not whom (perchance a kinsman,
Heir to that house—if childless died its daughter)
Spied—tracked the bridegroom to the bridal bower,
Aroused the sire, and said, "Thy child's dishonoured!"
Snatching his sword, the father sought the chamber;
Burst the closed portal—but his lifted hand
Escaped the crime. Cold as a fallen statue,
Cast from its blessed pedestal for ever,
The bride lay senseless on the lonely floor
By the oped casement, from whose terrible height
The generous boy, to save her life or honour,
Had plunged into his own sure death below.

Vyv. A happy death, if it saved her he loved!

Alton. A midnight grave concealed the mangled clay,
And buried the bride's secret. Few nights after,
Darkly as life from him had passed away,

Life dawned on thee—and, from the unconscious mother,
Stern hands conveyed the pledge of fatal nuptials
To the poor priest, who to thy loftier kindred
Owed the mean roof that sheltered thee.

Vyv. Oh say
I have a mother still!

Alton. Yes, she survived—
Her vows, thy birth, by the blind world unguessed;
And, after years of woe and vain resistance,
Forced to a lordlier husband's arms.

Vyv. My soul
Ofttimes recalls a shadowy Mournfulness,
With woman's patient brow, and saddest tears
Dropped fast from woman's eyes;—they were my mother's.

Alton. In stealth a wife—in stealth a mother! yes,
Then did she love thee, *then* aspired to own
In coming times, and bade me hoard these proofs
For that blest day. But, ah! with the new ties
Came new affections—to the second nuptials
A second son was born; she loved him better,
Better than thee—than her own soul!

Vyv. Poor mother!

Alton. And haughtier thoughts on riper life arose,
And worldly greatness feared the world's dread shame,
And she forsook her visits to thy pillow,
And the sire threatened, and the kinsman prayed,
Till, over-urged by terror for thy safety,
I took reluctant vows to mask the truth
And hush thy rights while lived thy mother's sire,
And he, her second unsuspecting lord.
Thus thy youth, nameless, left my lonely roof.
The sire and husband died while thou wert absent.
Thou liv'st—thou hast returned; mine oath is freed;
These scrolls attest my tale and prove thy birthright—
Hail, Lord of Beaufort—Heir of Montreyille!

Vyv. 'Tis she—'tis she! At the first glance I loved her!
And when I told my woes, she wept—she wept!
This is her writing. Look—look where she calls me
"Edmond and child." Old man, how thou hast wronged her!
Joy—joy! I fly to claim and find a Mother!

[*Exit* VYVYAN.

Alton. Just Power, propitiate Nature to that cry.
And, from the hardened rock, let living streams
Gush as in Horeb! Ah, how faintly flags,
Strained by unwonted action, weary age!
I'll seek the neighbouring hamlet—rest and pray.

[*Exit* ALTON.

SCENE 2. *The exterior of the castle, as in* Sc. 2nd, Act II. *Sunset. The twilight creeps on during the scene.*

Enter SIR GREY *and* WRECKLYFFE.

Sir G. The priest had left his home?
Wreck. The hour I reached it.
Sir G. With but one man? Didst thou not hound the foot-track?
Wreck. I did.
Sir G. Thou didst—and yet the prey escaped!
I have done. I gave thee thy soul's wish, revenge,
Revenge on Vyvyan—and thou leav'st his way
Clear to a height as high from thy revenge
As is yon watch-tower from a pirate's gibbet.
Wreck. Silence! thou——
Sir G. (*haughtily.*) Sir!
Wreck. (*subdued and cowed.*) Along the moors I track'd them,
But only came in sight and reach of spring
Just as they gained the broad and thronging road,
Aloud with eager strides, and clamorous voices—
A surge of tumult, wave to wave rebooming
How all the might of Parma and of Spain
Hurried its thunders on.
Sir G. Dolt, what to us
Parma and Spain? The beggar has no country!
Wreck. But deeds like that which thou dost urge me to
Are not risked madly in the populous day.
I come to thy sharp wit for safer orders.
Sir G. My wit is dulled by time, and must be ground
Into an edge by thought. Hist!—the door jars,
She comes. Skulk yonder—hide thee—but in call!
A moment sometimes makes or marreth fortune,

Just as the fiend Occasion springs to hand—
Be *thou* that fiend!

[WRECKLYFFE *passes among the trees, and exit.*

Enter LADY MONTREVILLE *from the cloister.*

Lady M. Look on me! What, nor tremble?
Couldst thou have deemed my father's gold a bribe
For my son's murder? Sold to pirates! Cast
On the wild seas!

Sir G. How! I knew nought of this.
If such the truth, peace to thy father's sins,
For of those sins is this. Let the past sleep,
Meet present ills—the priest hath left his home
With Vyvyan's comrade, and our scheme is foiled.

Lady M. I will, myself, see Alton on the morrow—
Edmond can scarce forestall me; for this night
Fear sails with him to the far Indian main.

Sir G. Let me do homage to thy genius. Sorceress,
What was thy magic?

Lady M. Terror for my Clarence,
And Edmond's love for Eveline.

Sir G. (*aside.*) I see!
Bribed by the prize of which she robs his rival!—
This night—so soon?—this night——

Lady M. I save my Clarence!
Till then, keep close, close to his side. Thou hast soothed him?

Sir G. Fear not—these sudden tidings of the foe
With larger fires have paled receding love—
But where is Vyvyan?

Lady M. Doubtless with his crew,
Preparing for departure.

Lord B. (*without.*) This way, Marsden.

Enter LORD BEAUFORT, *with* MARSDEN *and armed* Attendants.

Lord B. Repair yon broken parapets at dawn;
Yonder the culverins;—delve down more sharply
That bank;—clear out the moat. Those trees—eh, Marsden,—
Should fall? They'd serve to screen the foe! Ah, mother,
Make me a scarf to wear above the armour
In which thy father, 'mid the shouts of kings,
Shivered French lances at the Cloth of Gold.

Mars. Nay, my young lord, too vast for you that armour.
Lord B. No ; you forget that the breast swells in danger,
And honour adds a cubit to the stature.
Lady M. Embrace me, Clarence, I myself will arm thee.
Look at him, Marsden—yet they say I spoil him !
Sir G. (*who has been leaning over the low parapet, advances, draws aside* LADY MONTREVILLE *and whispers.*)
I mark i' the distance, swift disordered strides,
And the light bound of an impatient spirit ;
Vyvyan speeds hither, and the speed seems joy.
He sought his crew—Alton might there await him.
Lady M. His speed is to a bride.
Sir G. Ay, true—old age
Forgets that Love's as eager as Ambition ;
Yet hold thyself prepared.
Lady M. (*to herself.*) And if it were so !
Come, I will sound the depths of Beaufort's heart ;
And, as that answers, hush or yield to conscience.
Lead off these men.

[*Exeunt* SIR GREY *and* Attendants.

(*To* MARSDEN.) Go, meet my this day's guest,
And see he enter through the garden postern.

[*Exit* MARSDEN.

Clarence, come back.
Lord B. (*peevishly.*) What now ?
Lady M. Speak kindly, Clarence.
Alas, thou'lt know not till the grave close o'er me,
How I did need thy kindness !
Lord B. Pardon, mother,
My blunt speech now, and froward heat this morning.
Lady M. Be all such follies of the past, as leaves
Shed from the petals of the bursting flower.
Think thy soul slept, till honour's sudden dawn
Flashed, and the soil bloomed with one hero more !
Ah, Clarence, had I, too, an elder-born,
As had thy father by his former nuptials !—
Could thy sword carve out fortune ?
Lord B. Ay, my mother !
Lady M. Well the bold answer rushes from thy lips !
Yet, tell me frankly, dost thou not, in truth,
Prize over much the outward show of things ;

And couldst thou—rich with valour, health and beauty,
And hope—the priceless treasure of the young—
Couldst thou endure descent from that vain height
Where pride builds towers the heart inhabits not ;
To live less gorgeously, and curb thy wants
Within the state, not of the heir to earls,
But of a simple gentleman ?

Lord B. If reared to it,
Perchance contented so ; but *now*—no, never !
Such as I am, thy lofty self hath made me ;
Ambitious, haughty, prodigal ; and pomp
A part of my very life. If I could fall
From my high state, it were as Romans fell,
On their swords' point ! Why is your cheek so hueless ?
Why daunt yourself with airiest fantasies ?
Who can deprive me of mine heritage—
The titles borne at Palestine and Crecy ?
The seignory, ancient as the throne it guards,
That will be mine in trust for sons unborn,
When time—from this day may the date be far !—
Transfers the circlet on thy stately brows
(Forgive the boast !) to no unworthy heir.

Lady M. (*aside.*) My proud soul speaks in his, and stills remorse ;
I'll know no other son ! Now go, Lord Beaufort.

Lord B. So formal—fie !—has Clarence then offended ?

Lady M. Offended ?—thou ! Resume thy noble duties,
Sole heir of Montreville !

[*Exit* LORD BEAUFORT.

My choice is made.
As one who holds a fortress for his king,
I guard this heart for Clarence, and I close
Its gates against the stranger. Let him come.

[*Exit.*

Enter VYVYAN *and* EVELINE. *Twilight, but still clear; a few stars come out gradually.*

Evel. I would not bid thee stay, thy country calls thee—
But thou hast stunned my heart i' the midst of joy
With this dread sudden word—part—part !

Vyv. Live not

In the brief present. Go forth to the future !
Wouldst thou not see me worthier of thy love ?
Evel. Thou canst not be so.
Vyv. Sweet one, I am now
Obscure and nameless. What, if at thy feet
I could lay rank and fortune ?
Evel. These could give
To me no bliss save as they blest thyself.
Into the life of him she loves, the life
Of woman flows, and nevermore reflects
Sunshine or shadow on a separate wave.
Be his lot great, for his sake she loves greatness ;
Humble—a cot with *him* is Arcady !
Thou art ambitious ; thou wouldst arm for fame,
Fame then fires me too, and without a tear,
I bid thee go where fame is won—as now :
Win it and I rejoice ; but fail to win,
Were it not joy to think I could console ?
Vyv. O that I could give vent to this full heart !
Time rushes on, each glimmering star rebukes me—
Is that the Countess yonder ? This way—come.

[*Retire up the stage.*

Enter LORD BEAUFORT *and* SIR GREY.

Lord B. Leave England, say'st thou—and with her ?
Sir G. Thou hast wrung
The secret from me. Mark—I have thy promise
Not to betray me to thy mother.
Lord B. Ah !
Thought she to dupe me with that pomp of words,
And blind ambition while she beggar'd life ?
No, by yon heavens, she shall not so befool me !
Sir G. Be patient. Had I guessed how this had galled,
I had been dumb.
Lord B. Stand from the light ! Distraction !
She hangs upon his breast !

[*Hurries to* VYVYAN, *and then uncovering with an attempt at courtesy, draws him to the front of the stage.*

[WRECKLYFFE, *who, at the first entrance of* VYVYAN, *has looked forth and glided after him, as if not to lose sight of his revenge, now creeps through the foliage, within hearing.*

Lord B. Sir, one word with you.
This day such looks and converse passed between us
As men who wear these vouchers for esteem,
Cancel with deeds.
Vyv. (*aside.*) The brave boy! How I love him!
Lord B. What saidst thou, sir?
Evel. (*approaching.*) Oh, Clarence.
Lord B. Fear not, cousin.
I do but make excuses for my rudeness
At noon, to this fair cavalier.
Sir G. If so,
Let us not mar such courteous purpose, lady.
Evel. But—
Sir G. Nay, you are too timid!
[*Draws* Eveline *away.*
Lord B. Be we brief, sir.
You quit these parts to-night. This place beseems not
The only conference we should hold. I pray you
Name spot and hour in which to meet again,
Unwitnessed save by the broad early moon.
Vyv. Meet thee again—oh yes!
Lord B. There speaks a soldier,
And now I own an equal. Hour and place?
Vyv. Wait here till I have—
Lord B. No, sir, on thy road.
Here we are spied.
Vyv. So be it, on my road.
(*Aside.*) [There where I learned that heaven had given a brother,
There the embrace.] Within the hour I pass
St. Kinian's Cliff.
Lord B. Alone?
Vyv. Alone.
Lord B. Farewell!
Sir G. (*catching at* Lord Beaufort *as he goes out.*)
I heard St. Kinian's Cliff. I'll warn the Countess.
Lord B. Do it, and famish!
Sir G. Well, thy fence is skilful.
Lord B. And my hand firm.
Sir G. But when?
Lord B. Within the hour!
[*Exit* Lord Beaufort.

Evel. I do conjure thee on thine honour, Vyvyan,
Hath he not——
Vyv. What?
Evel. Forced quarrel on thee?
Vyv. Quarrel!
That were beyond his power. Upon mine honour,
No, and thrice no!
Evel. I scarce dare yet believe thee.
Vyv. Why then, I thus defy thee still to tremble.
Away this weapon (*throwing down his sword*). If I meet thy cousin,
Both must be safe, for one will be unarmed.
Evel. Mine own frank hero-lover, pardon me;
Yet, need'st thou not——
Vyv. Oh, as against the Spaniard,
There will be swords enow in Vyvyan's war-ship—
But art thou sure his heart is touched so lightly?
Evel. Jealous, and now!
Vyv. No, the fair boy, 'tis pity!

Enter MARSDEN.

Mars. My lady, sir, invites you to her presence;
Pray you, this way.
Evel. Remember—O, remember,
One word again, before we part; but one!
Vyv. One word. Heaven make it joyous.
Evel. Joyous!
Vyv. Soft, let me take that echo from thy lips
As a good omen. How my loud heart beats! (*aside*).
Friend, to your lady.

[*Exeunt* VYVYAN *and* MARSDEN *within the castle.*

Evel. Gone! The twilight world
Hath its stars still—but mine! Ah, woe is me!

[*Exit* EVELINE.

Sir G. Why take the challenge, yet cast off the weapon?
Perchance, if, gentle, he forbears the boy;
Perchance, if worldly wise, he fears the noble;
Or hath he, in his absence, chanced with Alton?
It matters not. Like some dark necromancer,
I raise the storm, then rule it thro' the fiend!
Where waits this man without a hope?

Wreck. (*advancing.*) Save vengeance!
Sir G. Wert thou as near when Beaufort spoke with Vyvyan?
Wreck. Shall I repeat what Vyvyan said to Beaufort?
Sir G. Thou know'st——
Wreck. I know, that to St. Kinian's Cliff
Will come the man whose hand wrote "felon" here.
Sir G. Mark, what I ask is harder than to strike;
'Tis to forbear—but 'tis revenge with safety.
Let Vyvyan first meet Beaufort; watch what pass,
And if the boy, whose hand obeys all passion,
Should slay thy foeman, and forestall thy vengeance,
Upon thy life (thou know'st, of old, Grey Malpas)
Prevent not, nor assist.
Wreck. That boy slay Vyvyan!
Sir G. For Vyvyan is unarmed.
Wreck. Law calls that—murder!
Sir G. Which by thy witness, not unbacked by proof,
Would give the murderer to the headsman's axe,
And leave Grey Malpas heir of Montreville,
And thee the richest squire in all his train.
Wreck. I do conceive the scheme. But if the youth
Fail or relent——
Sir G. I balk not thy revenge.
And, if the corpse of Beaufort's rival be
Found on the spot where armëd Beaufort met him,
To whom would justice track the death blow?—Beaufort!
Wreck. No further words. Or his, or mine the hand,
Count one life less on earth; and weave thy scheme—
As doth the worm its coils—around the dead.

[*Exit* WRECKLYFFE.

Sir G. One death avails as three, since for the mother
Conscience and shame were sharper than the steel.
So, I o'erleap the gulf, nor gaze below.
On this side, desolate ruin; bread begrudged;
And ribald scorn on impotent grey hairs;
The base poor cousin Boyhood threats with famine—
Whose very dog is butchered if it bark:—
On that side bended knees and fawning smiles,
Ho! ho! there—Room for my lord's knights and pages!
Room at the Court—room there, beside the throne!

Ah, the new Earl of Montreville ! His lands
Cover two shires. Such men should rule the state—
A gracious lord—the envious call him old ;
Not so—the coronet conceals grey hairs.
He limp'd, they say, when he wore hose of serge.
Tut, the slow march becomes the robes of ermine.
Back, Conscience, back ! Go scowl on boors and beggars—
Room, smiling flatterers, room for the new Earl !

[*Exit* SIR GREY.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE 1. LADY MONTREVILLE'S *apartment as in* Sc. 1st, Act II. *Lights. During the scene the moon rises, seen through the casement.* LADY MONTREVILLE *seated.*

Enter VYVYAN.

Lady M. Thou com'st already to demand thy bride ?
Vyv. Alas ! such nuptials are deferred. This night
The invader summons me—my sole bride, Honour,
And my sole altar—England ! (*Aside.*) How to break it ?
Lady M. My Clarence on the land, and thou on sea,
Both for their country armed ! Heaven shield ye both !
Vyv. Say you that ?—*Both* ?—You, who so love your son ?
Lady M. Better than life, I love him !
Vyv. (*aside.*) I must rush
Into the thick. Time goads me ! (*Aloud.*) Had you not
Another son ? A first-born ?
Lady M. Sir !
Vyv. A son,
On whom those eyes dwelt first—whose infant cry
Broke first on that divine and holiest chord
In the deep heart of woman, which awakes
All Nature's tenderest music ? Turn not from me !
I know the mystery of thy mournful life.
Will it displease thee—will it—to believe
That son is living still ?
Lady M. Sir—sir—such license
Expels your listener (*rises*).
Vyv. No, thou wilt not leave me ?
I say, thou wilt not leave me—on my knees
I say, thou *shalt* not leave me !
Lady M. Loose thine hold !
Vyv. I am thy son—thine Edmond—thine own child !

Saved from the steel, the deep, the storm, the battle ;
Rising from death to thee—the source of life !
Flung by kind heaven once more upon thy breast,
Kissing thy robe, and clinging to thy knees.
Dost thou reject thy son ?
Lady M. I have no son,
Save Clarence Beaufort.
Vyv. Do not—do not hear her,
Thou who, enthroned amid the pomp of stars,
Dost take no holier name than that of Father !
Thou hast no other son ? O, cruel one !
Look—look—these letters to the priest who reared him—
See where thou call'st him "Edmond"—"child"—"life's all !"—
Can the words be so fresh on this frail record,
Yet fade, obliterate from the undying soul ?
By these—by these—by all the solemn past,
By thy youth's lover—by his secret grave—
By every kiss upon thine infant's cheek—
By every tear that wept his fancied death—
Grieve not that still a first-born calls thee "Mother !"
Lady M. Rise. If these prove that such a son once lived,
Where are your proofs that still he lives in you ?
Vyv. There ! in thine heart !—thine eyes that dare not face me !
Thy trembling limbs, each power, each pulse of being,
That vibrates at my voice ! Let pride encase thee
With nine-fold adamant, it rends asunder
At the great spell of Nature—Nature calls ;
Parent, come forth !
Lady M. (*aside*). Resolve gives way ! Lost Clarence !
What ! "Fall as Romans fell, on their swords' point ?"
No, Clarence, no ! (*turning fiercely.*) Impostor ! If thy craft
Hath, by suborning most unworthy spies,
Sought in the ruins of a mourner's life
Some base whereon to pile this laboured falsehood,
Let law laugh down the fable—Quit my presence.
Vyv. No. I will not.
Lady M. Will not ! Ho !
Vyv. Call your hirelings,
And let them hear me (*striding to the hearth*). Lo, beneath thy roof,

And on the sacred hearth of sires to both,
Under their 'scutcheon, and before their forms
Which from the ghostly canvas I invoke
To hail their son—I take my dauntless stand,
Armed with my rights ; now bid your menials thrust
From his own hearth the heir of Montreville !

Enter Servants.

Lady M. Seize on—— (*Clasping her hands before her face.*)
Out—out! His father stands before me
In the son's image. No, I dare not !
Servant. Madam,
Did you not summon us ?
Vyv. They wait your mandate,
Lady of Montreville.
Lady M. I called not. Go !

[*Exeunt* Servants.

Art thou my son ? If so, have mercy, Edmond !
Let Heaven attest with what remorseful soul
I yielded to my ruthless father's will,
And with cold lips profaned a second vow.
I *had* a child—I was a parent, true ;
But exiled from the parent's paradise,
Not mine the frank joy in the face of day,
The pride, the boast, the triumph, and the rapture ;
Thy couch was sought as with a felon's step,
And whispering nature shuddered at detection.
Oh, couldst thou guess what hell to loftier minds
It is to live in one eternal lie !
Yet, spite of all, how dear thou *wert !*
Vyv. I was ?
Is the time past for ever ? What my sin ?
Lady M. I loved thee till another son was born,
A blossom 'mid the snows. Thou wert afar,
Seen rarely—alien—on a stranger's breast
Leaning for life. But this thrice-blessëd one
Smiled in mine eyes, took being from my breast,
Slept in mine arms ; here love asked no concealment—

Here the tear shamed not—here the kiss was glory—
Here I put on my royalty of woman—
The guardian, the protector ; food, health, life—
It clung to me for all. Mother and child,
Each was the all to each.
Vyv. O, prodigal,
Such wealth to him, yet nought to spare to me !
Lady M. My boy grew up, my Clarence. Looking on him
Men prized his mother more—so fair and stately,
And the world deemed to such high state the heir !
Years went ; they told me that by Nature's death
Thou hadst in boyhood passed away to heaven.
I wept thy fate ; and long ere tears were dried,
The thought that danger, too, expired for Clarence,
Did make thy memory gentle.
Vyv. Do you wish
That I were still what once you wept to deem me ?
Lady M. I did rejoice when my lip kissed thy brow ;
I did rejoice to give thy heart its bride ;
I would have drained my coffers for her dowry ;
But wouldst thou ask me if I can rejoice
That a life rises from the grave abrupt
To doom the life I cradled, reared, and wrapt
From every breeze, to desolation ?—No !
Vyv. What would you have me do ?
Lady M. Accept the dowry,
And, blest with Eveline's love, renounce thy mother.
Vyv. Renounce thee ! No—*these* lips belie not Nature !
Never !
Lady M. Eno'—I can be mean no more,
Ev'n in the prayer that asked his life. Go, slay it.
Vyv. Why must my life slay his ?
Lady M. Since his was shaped
To soar to power—not grovel to dependence—
And I do seal his death-writ when I say,
" Down to the dust, Usurper ; bow the knee
And sue for alms to the true Lord of Beaufort."
Those words shall not be said—I'll find some nobler.
Thy rights are clear. The law might long defer them—
I do forestall the law. These lands be thine.

Wait not my death to lord it in my hall:
Thus I say not to Clarence, "Be dependent"—
But I *can* say, "Share poverty with me."
I go to seek him; at his side depart;
He spurns thine alms: I wronged thee—take thy vengeance!
Vyv. Merciless—hold, and hear me—I—alms!—vengeance!—
True—true, this heart a mother never cradled,
Or she had known it better.
Lady M. Edmond!
Vyv. Hush!
Call me that name no more—it dies for ever!
Nay, I renounce thee not, for that were treason
On the child's lip. Parent, renounce thy child!
As for these nothings (*giving the papers*), take them; if you dread
To find words, once too fond, they're blurr'd already—
You'll see but tears: tears of such sweetness, madam.
I did not think of lands and halls, pale Countess,
I did but think—these arms shall clasp a mother.
Now they are worthless—take them. Never guess
How covetous I was—how hearts, cast off,
Pine for their rights—rights not of parchment, lady.
Part we, then, thus? No, put thine arms around me;
Let me remember in the years to come,
That I have lived to say, a mother blessed me!
Lady M. Oh, Edmond, Edmond, thou hast conquered, Edmond!
Thy father's voice!—his eyes! Look down from heaven,
Bridegroom, and pardon me; I bless thy child!
Vyv. Hark! she has blessed her son! It mounts to heaven,
The blessing of the mother on her child!
Mother, and mother;—how the word thrills thro' me!.
Mother, again dear mother! Place thy hand
Here—on my heart. Now thou hast felt it beat,
Wilt thou misjudge it more? Recoil'st thou still?
Lady M. (*breaking from him.*) What have I done?—betrayed,
condemned my Clarence!
Vyv. Condemned thy Clarence! By thy blessing, No!
That blessing was my birthright. I have won
That which I claimed. Give Clarence all the rest.
Silent, as sacred, be the memory
Of this atoning hour. Look, evermore (*kissing her*)
Thus—thus I seal the secret of thy first-born!

Now, only Clarence lives! Heaven guard thy Clarence!
Now deem me dead to thee. Farewell, farewell!

[*Exit* VYVYAN.

Lady M. (*rushing after him*). Hold, hold—too generous, hold!
Come back, my son!

[*Exit* LADY MONTREVILLE.

SCENE 2. *St. Kinian's Cliff. The ship on the sea.* WRECKLYFFE *standing in the shadow of a broken rock.*

Enter LORD BEAUFORT.

Lord B. And still not here! The hour has long since passed.
I'll climb yon tallest peak, and strain mine eyes
Down the sole path between the cliff and ocean.

[*Exit* LORD BEAUFORT.

Wreck. (*advancing*). The boors first grinned, then paled, and crept away;
The tavern-keeper slunk, and muttered "Hangdog!"
And the she-drudge whose rough hand served the drink,
Stifled her shriek, and let the tankard fall!
It was not so in the old merry days:
Then the scarred hangdog was "fair gentleman."
And—but the reckoning waits. Why tarries he?

[*Signal gun from the ship.*

A signal! Ha!

Vyv. (*without*). I come! I come!

Wreck. (*grasping his knife, but receding as he sees* BEAUFORT, *who appears above*). Hot lordling!
I had well nigh forestalled thee. Patience!

[*Creeps under the shadow of the rock, and thence steals out of sight in the background.*

Enter LORD BEAUFORT.

Lord B. Good!
From crag to crag he bounds—my doubts belied him;
His haste is eager as my own.

Enter VYVYAN.

Sir, welcome.

Vyv. Stay me not, stay me not! Thou hast all else
But honour—rob me not of that! Unhand me!

Lord B. Unhand thee ? yes—to take thy ground and draw.
Vyv. Thou know'st not what thou sayest. Let me go !
Lord B. Thyself didst name the place and hour :
Vyv. For here
I thought to clasp —(*aside*) I have no brother now !
Lord B. He thought to clasp his Eveline. Death and madness !
Vyv. Eveline ! Thou lov'st not Eveline. Be consoled.
Thou hast not known affliction—hast not stood
Without the porch of the sweet home of men ;
Thou hast leaned upon no reed that pierced the heart ;
Thou hast not known what it is, when in the desert
The hopeless find the fountain : happy boy,
Thou hast not loved. Leave love to man and sorrow !
Lord B. Dost thou presume upon my years ? Dull scoffer !
The brave is man betimes—the coward never.
Boy if I be, my playmates have been veterans ;
My toy a sword, and my first lesson valour.
And, had I taken challenge as thou hast,
And on the ground replied to bold defiance
With random words implying dastard taunts,
With folded arms, pale lip, and haggard brow,
I'd never live to call myself a man.
Thus says the boy, since manhood is so sluggard,
Soldier and captain. Do not let me strike thee !
Vyv. Do it,—and tell thy mother, when thy hand
Outraged my cheek, I pardoned thee, and pitied.
Lord B. Measureless insult ! Pitied !

[*Second gun.*

Vyv. There, again !
And still so far ! Out of my path, insane one !
Were there nought else, thy youth, thy mother's love
Should make thee sacred to a warrior's arm—
Out of my path. Thus, then (*suddenly lifts, and puts him aside*)
Oh, England—England !
Do not reject me too !—I come ! I come !

[*Exit up the cliff.*

Lord B. Thrust from his pathway—every vein runs fire !
Thou shalt not thus escape me—Stand or die ! (*rushes after him.*)

[VYVYAN *retreats to the edge of the cliff, and grasps for support at the bough of a tree.*

Vyv. Forbear, forbear!

Lord B. Thy blood on thine own head!

[*Third gun.*

[*As* BEAUFORT *lifts his sword and strikes,* VYVYAN *retreats —the bough breaks, and* VYVYAN *falls down the precipice.*

Wreck. (*who has followed part of the way, peering down the precipice*)—Is the deed done? If not, this steel completes it.

[*Descends the cliff, and disappears.*

[LORD BEAUFORT *sinks on his knee in horror. The ship sails on as the scene closes slowly.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE 1. *St. Kinian's Cliff. A year is supposed to have passed since the date of* Act IV.

Enter SIR GREY DE MALPAS.

Sir G. A year—and Wrecklyffe still is mute and absent,
Even as Vyvyan is ! Most clear ! He saw,
And haply shared, the murderous deed of Beaufort ;
And Beaufort's wealth hath bribed him to desert
Penury and me. That Clarence slew his brother
I cannot doubt. He shuts me from his presence ;
But I have watched him, wandering, lone, yet haunted—
Marked the white lip and glassy eyes of one
For whom the grave has ghosts, and silence, horror.
His mother, on vague pretext of mistrust
That I did sell her first-born to the pirate,
Excludes me from her sight, but sends me alms
Lest the world cry, " See, her poor cousin starves ! "
Can she guess Beaufort's guilt ? Nay ! For she lives !
I know that deed, which, told unto the world,
Would make me heir of Montreville. O, mockery !
For how proceed ?—no proof ! How charge ?—no witness !
How cry, " Lo ! murder ! " yet produce no corpse !

Enter ALTON.

Alton. Sir Grey de Malpas ! I was on my way
To your own house.
Sir G. Good Alton—can I serve you ?
Alton. The boy I took from thee, returned a man
Twelve months ago : mine oath absolved.
Sir G. 'Tis true.
Alton. Here did I hail the rightful lord of Montreville,
And from these arms he rushed to claim his birthright.
Sir G. (*aside*) She never told me this.

Alton. That night, his war-ship
Sailed to our fleet. I deemed him with the battle.
Time went; Heaven's breath had scattered the Armada.
I sate at my porch to welcome him—he came not.
I said, "His mother has abjured her offspring,
And law detains him while he arms for justice."
Hope sustained patience till to-day.

Sir G. To-day?

Alton. The very friend who had led me to his breast
Returns, and——

Sir G. (*soothingly.*) Well?

Alton. He fought not with his country.

Sir G. And this cold friend lets question sleep a year?

Alton. His bark too rashly chased the flying foe;
Was wrecked on hostile shores; and he a prisoner.

Sir G. Lean on my arm, thou'rt faint.

Alton. Oh, Grey de Malpas,
Can men so vanish—save in murderous graves?
You turn away.

Sir G. What murder without motive?
And who had motive here?

Alton. Unnatural kindred.

Sir G. Kindred! Ensnare me not! Mine, too, that kindred.
Old man, beware how thou asperse Lord Beaufort!

Alton. Beaufort! Oh, horror! How the instinctive truth
Starts from thy lips!

Sir G. From mine—priest!

Alton. Not of man
Ask pardon, if accomplice——

Sir G. I accomplice!
Nay, since 'tis my good name thou sulliest now—
This is mine answer: Probe; examine; search;
And call on justice to belie thy slander.
Go, seek the aid of stout Sir Godfrey Seymour;
A dauntless magistrate; strict, upright, honest:
(*Aside.*) At heart a Puritan, and hates a Lord,
With other slides that fit into my grooves.

Alton. He bears with all the righteous name thou giv'st him,
Thy zeal acquits thyself.

Sir G. And charges none.

Alton. Heaven reads the heart. Man can but track the deed.
My task is stern.

[*Exit* ALTON.

Sir G. Scent lies—suspicion dogs—
And with hot breath pants on the flight of conscience.
Ah! who comes here? Sharp wit, round all occasion!

Enter FALKNER *with* Sailors.

Falk. Learn all you can—when latest seen, and where—
Meanwhile I seek yon towers.

[*Exeunt* Sailors.

Sir G. Doubtless, fair sir,
I speak to Vyvyan's friend. My name is Malpas—
Can it be true, as Alton doth inform me,
That you suspect your comrade died by murder?

Falk. Murder!

Sir G. And by a rival's hand? Amazed!
Yet surely so I did conceive the priest.

Falk. Murder!—a rival!—true, he loved a maiden!

Sir G. In yonder halls!

Falk. Despair! Am I too late
For all but vengeance! Speak, sir—who this rival?

Sir G. Vengeance!—fie—seek those towers, and learn compassion.
Sad change indeed, since here, at silent night,
Your Vyvyan met the challenge of Lord Beaufort.

Falk. A challenge?—here?—at night?

Sir G. Yes, this the place.
How sheer the edge! crag, cave, and chasm below!
If the foot slipped,—nay, let us think slipped heedless,—
Or some weak wounded man were headlong plunged,
What burial place more secret?

Falk. Hither, look!
Look where, far down the horrible descent,
Through some fresh cleft rush subterranean waves,
How wheel and circle ghastly swooping wings!

Sir G. The sea-gulls ere a storm,

Falk. No! Heaven is clear!
The storm they tell, speeds lightning towards the guilty.
So have I seen the foul birds in lone creeks

Sporting around the shipwrecked seaman's bones.
Guide me, ye spectral harbingers!

[*Descends the cliff.*

Sir G. From bough
To bough he swings—from peak to slippery peak
I see him dwindling down;—the loose stones rattle;
He falls—he falls—but 'lights on yonder ledge,
And from the glaring sun turns stedfast eyes
Where still the sea-gulls wheel; now crawls, now leaps;
Crags close around him—not a glimpse nor sound!
O, diver for the dead,—bring up but bones,
And round the skull I'll wreathe my coronet.

[*Scene closes on* SIR GREY *seated.*

SCENE 2. *A room in the castle of Montreville—with casement opening on a balcony that overhangs the sea.*

Enter LADY MONTREVILLE *and* MARSDEN.

Lady M. Will he nor hunt nor hawk? This constant gloom!
Canst thou not guess the cause? He *was* so joyous!

Mars. Young plants need air and sun; man's youth the world.
Young men should pine for action. Comfort, madam,
The cause is clear, if you recall the date.

Lady M. Thou hast marked the date?

Mars. Since that bold seaman's visit.

Lady M. Thy tongue runs riot, man. How should that stranger,—
I say a stranger, strike dismay in Beaufort?

Mars. Dismay! Not that, but emulation!

Lady M. Ay!
You speak my thoughts, and I have prayed our Queen
To rank your young lord with her chivalry;
This day mine envoy should return.

Mars. This day?
Let me ride forth and meet him!

Lady M. Go!

[*Exit* MARSDEN.

'Tis true!
Such was the date. Hath Clarence guessed the secret—
Guessed that a first-born lives? I dread to question!

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Yet sure the wronged was faithful, and the wrong
Is my heart's canker-worm and gnaws unseen.
Where wanderest thou, sad Edmond? Not one word
To say thou liv'st—thy very bride forsaken,
As if love, frozen at the parent well-spring,
Left every channel dry! What hollow tread,
Heavy and weary falls? Is that the step
Which touched the mean earth with a lightsome scorn,
As if the air its element?

Enter BEAUFORT—*his dress neglected—wrapped in a loose mantle of fur.*

Lord B. Cold! cold!
And yet I saw the beggar doff his frieze,
Warm in his rags. I shiver under ermine.
For me 'tis never summer—never—never!
Lady M. How fares my precious one?
Lord B. Well;—but so cold.
Ho! there! without!

Enter Servant.

Wine—wine!

[*Exit* Servant.

Lady M. Alas! alas!
Why, this is fever—thy hand burns.
Lord B. That hand!
Ay, *that* hand always burns.

Re-enter Servant *with wine, and a goblet of rich workmanship, set in jewels.*

Look you—the cup
The wondrous Tuscan jeweller, Cellini,
Made for a king! A king's gift to thy father!
What? Serve such gauds to me!
Lady M. Thyself so ordered
In the proud whims thy light heart made so graceful.
Lord B. Was I proud once? Ha! ha! What's this?—not wine?
Servant. The Malvoisie your lordship's friends, last year,
Esteemed your rarest.
Lord B. How one little year
Hath soured it into nausea! Faugh—'tis rank.
Lady M. (*to servant.*) Send for the leech—quick—go.

[*Exit* Servant.

Oh, Clarence! Clarence!
Is this the body's sickness, or the soul's?
Is it life's youngest sorrow, love misplaced?
Thou dost not still love Eveline?

Lord B. Did I love her?

Lady M. Or one whose birth might more offend my pride?
Well, I *am* proud. But I would hail as daughter
The meanest maiden from whose smile thy lip
Caught smiles again. Thy smile is day to me.

Lord B. Poor mother, fear not. Never hermit-monk,
Gazing on skulls in lone sepulchral cells,
Had heart as proof to woman's smile as mine.

Lady M. The court—the camp—ambition—

Enter MARSDEN *with a letter.*

Mars. From the Queen!

(*While the* COUNTESS *reads,* MARSDEN, *turning to* LORD BEAUFORT,
My dear young lord, be gay! The noblest knight
In all the land, Lord Essex, on his road
From conquered Cadiz, with the armëd suite
That won his laurels, sends before to greet you,
And prays you will receive him in your halls.

Lord B. The flower of England's gentry, spotless Essex!
Sully him not, old man,-bid him pass on.

Lady M. Joy, Beaufort, joy! August Elizabeth
Owns thee her knight, and bids thee wear her colours,
And break thy maiden lance for England's lady.

Lord B. I will not go. Barbed steeds and knightly banners—
Baubles and gewgaws!

Mars. Glorious to the young.

Lord B. Ay—to the young! Oh, when did poet-dreams
Ever shape forth such fairy land as youth!
Gossamer hopes, pearled with the dews of morn,
Gay valour, bounding light on welcome peril,—
Errors themselves, the sparkling overflow,
Of life as headlong, but as pure as streams
That rush from sunniest hill-tops kissing heaven,—
Lo! *that* is youth. Look on my soul, old man,
Well—is it not more grey than those blanched hairs?

Lady M. He raves—heed not his words. Go, speed the leech!

[*Exit* MARSDEN.

Lady M. (*aside.*) I know these signs—by mine own soul I know them;
This is nor love, nor honour's sigh for action,
Nor Nature's milder suffering. This is guilt!
Clarence—now, side by side, I sit with thee!
Put thine arms round me, lean upon my breast—
It is a mother's breast. So, that is well;
Now—whisper low—what is thy crime?
Lord B. (*bursting into tears.*) O, mother!
Would thou hadst never borne me!
Lady M. Ah, ungrateful!
Lord B. No—for thy sake I speak. Thou—justly proud,
For thou art pure; thou, on whose whitest name
Detraction spies no soil—dost thou say "crime"
Unto thy son; and is his answer tears?

Enter EVELINE, *weaving flowers as in first act.*

Evel.—

Blossoms, I weave ye
To drift on the sea,
Say when ye find him
Who sang "Woe is me!"—

(*Approaching* BEAUFORT.) Have you no news?
Lord B. Of whom?
Evel. Of Vyvyan?
Lord B. That name! Her reason wanders; and O, mother,
When that name's uttered—so doth mine—hush, hush it.

[EVELINE *goes to the balcony, and throws the garland into the sea.*

Lady M. Kill me at once—or when I ask again,
What is thy crime?—reply, 'No harm to Vyvyan!'
Lord B. (*breaking away.*) Unhand me! Let me go!
[*Exit* LORD BEAUFORT.
Lady M. This pulse beats still!
Nature rejects me!
Evel. (*from the balcony.*) Come, come—see the garland,
It dances on the waves so merrily.

Enter MARSDEN.

Mars. (*drawing aside* LADY M.) Forgive this haste. Amid St. Kinian's cliffs

Where, once an age, on glassy peaks may glide
The shadow of a man, a stranger venturing
Hath found bleached human bones, and to your hall,
Nearest at hand, and ever famed for justice,
Leads on the crowd, and saith the dead was Vyvyan.

Evel. Ha! who named Vyvyan? Has he then come back?

Mars. Fair mistress, no.

Lady M. If on this terrible earth
Pity lives still—lead her away. Be tender.

Evel. (*approaching* LADY M.) I promised him to love you as a mother.
Kiss me, and trust in Heaven! He will return!

[*Exeunt* EVELINE *and* MARSDEN.

Lady M. These horrors are unreal.

Enter a Servant.

Servant. Noble mistress,
Sir Godfrey Seymour, summoned here in haste,
Craves your high presence in the Justice Hall.

Lady M. Mine—Mine? Where goëst thou?

Servant. Sir Godfrey bade me
Seek my young lord.

Lady M. Stir not. My son is ill.
Thyself canst witness how the fever—(*hurrying to the side scene*) Marsden!

Enter MARSDEN.

My stricken Clarence!—In his state, a rumour
Of—of what passes here, might blast life—reason:
Go, lure him hence—if he resist, use force
As to a maniac.—Good old man, thou lov'st him;
His innocent childhood played around thy knees—
I know I can trust *thee*—Quick—speak not:—Save!

[*Exit* MARSDEN.

(*to* Servant.) Announce my coming.

[*Exit* Servant.

This day, life to shield
The living son:—Death, with the dead, to-morrow!

[*Exit* LADY MONTREVILLE.

SCENE 3. *A vast feudal hall in the castle. At the extreme end, the carved screen work of later date, supporting the minstrels' gallery (similar to that in Hampton Court). The opening in the screen is made the principal entry on the scene. In another part of the hall a high Gothic casement forms a recess, over which a curtain is drawn aside. In the recess a tressel, serving as a bier for the remains of the dead, which are covered with a cloth. At each side of the screen entry, a halberdier in the service of* SIR GODFREY SEYMOUR, *officiating as constable.* ALTON *kneeling before the tressel in the recess.*

In front of the stage, a table, before which SIR GODFREY SEYMOUR *seated. A* Clerk *employed in writing.* SIR GREY DE MALPAS *standing near* SIR GODFREY. FALKNER *a little apart.*

Sir Godf. (*to* FALKNER.) Be patient, sir, and give us ampler proof
To deem yon undistinguishable bones
The relics of your friend.

Falk. That gentleman
Can back my oath, that these, the plume, the gem
Which Vyvyan wore—I found them on the cliff.

Sir Godf. Verily, is it so?

Sir Grey. (*with assumed reluctance.*) Sith law compel me—
Yes, I must vouch it.

Enter Servant.

Servant. (*placing a chair of state.*) Sir, my lady comes.

Sir Godf. Let not that sight appal her.

Sir Grey. And her son.

[Servant *draws the curtain round the recess, leaving* ALTON *still kneeling within, and exit.*

Enter LADY MONTREVILLE, *and seats herself.*

Sir Godf. You pardon, madam, mine imperious duties,
And know my dismal task——

Lady M. Pray you be brief, sir.

Sir Godf. Was, this time year, the captain of a war-ship,
Vyvyan his name, your guest?

Lady M. But one short day—
To see my ward, whom he had saved from pirates.

Sir Godf. I pray you, madam, in his converse with you
Spoke he of any foe, concealed or open,
Whom he had cause to fear?

Lady M. Of none!

Sir Godf. Nor know you
Of any such?

Lady M. (*after a pause.*) I do not.
Sir Godf. (*aside to* FALKNER.) Would you farther
Question this lady, sir?
Falk. No, she is woman,
And mother; let her go. I wait Lord Beaufort.
Sir Godf. Madam, no longer will we task your presence.

Enter LORD BEAUFORT, *breaking from* MARSDEN, *and other* Attendants.

Lord B. Off, dotard, off! Guests in our hall!
Lady M. He is ill.
Sore ill—fierce fever—I will lead him forth.
Come, Clarence; darling, come!
Lord B. Who is this man?
Falk. The friend of Vyvyan, whose pale bones plead yonder.
Lord B. I—I will go. Let's steal away, my mother.

[SIR GREY *intercepts the retreat of* BEAUFORT, *and, with bye play intimating remonstrance and encouragement, urges him forward.*

Falk. Lost friend, in war, how oft thy word was 'spare.'—
Methinks I hear thee now. (*drawing aside* LORD BEAUFORT.)
Young lord, I came
Into these halls, demanding blood for blood—
But thy remorse (this *is* remorse) disarms me.
Speak; do but say—(look, I am young myself,
And know how hot is youth;) speak—do but say,
After warm words, struck out from jealous frenzy,
Quick swords were drawn: Man's open strife with man—
Passion, not murder: Say this, and may law
Pardon thee, as a soldier does!
Sir Grey (*to* MARSDEN.) Call Eveline,
She can attest our young lord's innocence. [*Exit* MARSDEN.
Falk. He will not speak, sir, let my charge proceed.
Lady M. (*aside.*) Whate'er the truth—of that—of that hereafter,
Now but remember, child, thy birth, thy name;—
Thy mother's heart, it beats beside thee—take
Strength from its pulses.
Lord B. Keep close, and for thy sake
I will not cry—''Twas passion, yet still, murder!'
Sir Godf. (*who has been conversing aside with* SIR GREY.)
Then jealous love the motive? Likelier that
Than Alton's wilder story.

Enter EVELINE *and* MARSDEN.

Sweet young madam,
If I be blunt, forgive me; we are met
On solemn matters which relate to one
Who, it is said, was your betrothed:

Evel. To Vyvyan!

Sir Godf. 'Tis also said, Lord Beaufort crossed his suit,
And your betrothed resented.

Evel. No! forgave.

Sir Grey. Yes, when you feared some challenge from Lord Beaufort,
Did Vyvyan not cast down his sword and say,
'Both will be safe, for one will be unarmed?'

(*Great sensation through the hall.* FALKNER *and* SIR GODFREY *both.*) Unarmed!

Evel. His very words!

Falk. Oh, vile assassin!

Sir Godf. Accuser, peace! This is most grave. Lord Beaufort,
Upon such tokens, with your own strange bearing,
As ask appeal to more august tribunal,
You stand accused of purposed felon murder
On one named Vyvyan, Captain of the *Dreadnought*—
Wouldst thou say aught against this solemn charge?

Evel. Murdered!—he—Vyvyan! Thou his murderer, Clarence,
In whose rash heat my hero loved frank valour?
Lo! I, to whom his life is as the sun
Is to the world—with my calm trust in Heaven
Mantle thee thus.

Lady M. (*aside.*) Be firm—deny, and live.

Lord B. (*with a vacillating attempt at his former haughtiness.*)
You call my bearing "strange"—what marvel, sir?
Stunned by such charges, of a crime so dread.
What proof against me?

Lady M. (*whilst* LADY M. *speaks,* SIR GREY *steals behind the curtain.*) Words deposed by whom?
A man unknown;—a girl's vague fear of quarrel—
His motive what? A jealous anger! Phantoms!
Is not my son mine all?—And yet this maid
I plighted to another. Had I done so
If loved by him, and at the risk of life?
Again, I ask all present what the motive?

Alton. (*advancing from the recess with* SIR GREY.)
Rank, fortune, birthright. Miserable woman!
Lady M. Whence com'st thou, pale accuser?
Alton. From the dead!
Which of ye two will take the post I leave?
Which of ye two will draw aside that veil,
Look on the bones behind, and cry, "I'm guiltless?"
Hast thou conspired with him to slay thy first-born,
Or knows he not that Vyvyan was his brother?

[LADY MONTREVILLE *swoons. Till now* EVELINE *has held to* BEAUFORT *—now she rushes to* LADY MONTREVILLE.

Lord B. My brother! No! no! no! (*clutching hold of* SIR GREY.)
Kinsman, he lies!
Sir Grey. Alas!
Lord B. Wake, mother, wake. I ask not speech.
Lift but thy brow—one flash of thy proud eye
Would strike these liars dumb!
Alton. Read but those looks
To learn that thou art——
Lord B. Cain! (*grasping* FALKNER.) Out with thy sword—
Hew off this hand. Thou calledst me "Assassin!"
Too mild—say "Fratricide!" Cain, Cain, thy brother! [*Falls.*
Evel. It cannot be so! No. Thou wondrous Mercy,
That, from the pirate's knife, the funeral seas
And all their shapes of death, didst save the lone one,
To prove to earth how vainly man despairs
While God is in the heavens—I cling to thee,
As Faith unto its anchor! (*To* SIR GREY.) Back, false kinsman!
I tell thee Vyvyan lives—the boy is guiltless!
Falk. Poor, noble maid! How my heart bleeds for her!
Lady M. (*starting up.*) Sentence us both! or, stay,—would law condemn
A child so young, if I had urged him to it?
Sir Godf. Unnatural mother, hush! Sir Grey, to you;
Perchance ere long, by lives too justly forfeit,
Raised to this earldom, I entrust these—prisoners.

[*Motions to the halberdiers, who advance to arrest* BEAUFORT *and* LADY MONTREVILLE.

Mars. O, day of woe!
Sir Grey. Woe—yes! Make way for us.

[*Trumpet.*

Enter Servant.

Servant. My lord of Essex just hath passed the gates;
But an armed knight who rode beside the Earl,
After brief question to the crowd without,
Sprang from his steed, and forces here his way!

Enter Knight *in half armour—wrapped in his horseman's cloak, his vizor three parts down.*

Knight. Forgiveness of all present!
Sir Godf. Who art thou?
Knight. A soldier, knighted by the hand of Essex
Upon the breach of Cadiz.
Sir Godf. What thy business?
Knight. To speak the truth. Who is the man accused
Of Vyvyan's murder?
Sir Grey. You behold him yonder.
Knight. 'Tis false.
Sir Grey. His own lips have confessed his crime.
Knight. (*throwing down his gauntlet.*)
This to the man whose crushing lie bows down
Upon the mother's bosom that young head!
Say you "confess'd!" O tender, tender conscience!
Vyvyan, rough sailor, galled him and provoked;
He raised his hand. To the sharp verge of the cliff
Vyvyan recoiled, backed by an outstretched bough.
The bough gave way—he fell, but not to perish;
Saved by a bush-grown ledge that broke his fall;
Long stunned he lay; when opening dizzy eyes,
On a grey crag between him and the abyss
He saw the face of an old pirate foe;
Saw the steel lifted, saw it flash and vanish,
As a dark mass rushed thro' the moonlit air
Dumb into deeps below—the indignant soil
Had slid like glass beneath the murderer's feet,
And his own death-spring whirled him to his doom.
Then Vyvyan rose, and, crawling down the rock,
Stood by the foe, who, stung to late remorse
By hastening death, gasped forth a dread confession.
The bones ye find are those of Murder's agent—
Murder's arch-schemer—Who?—Ho! Grey de Malpas,
Stand forth! Thou art the man!

Sir Grey. Hemm'd round with toils,
Soul, crouch no more! Base hireling, doff thy mask,
And my sword writes the lie upon thy front.
By Beaufort's hand died Vyvyan—
Knight. As the spell
Shatters the sorcerer when his fiends desert him,
Let thine own words bring doom upon thyself!
Now face the front on which to write the lie. [*Casts off his helmet.*

[SIR GREY *drops his sword and staggers back into the arms of the retainers.*

Evel. Thou liv'st, thou liv'st—
Vyv. (*kneeling to her.*) Is life worth something still?
Sir Grey. Air, air—my staff—some chord seems broken here.
[*Pressing his heart.*
Marsden, your lord shot his poor cousin's dog;
In the dog's grave—mark!—bury the poor cousin.
[*Sinks exhausted, and is borne out.*

Vyv. Mine all on earth, if I may call thee mine.
Evel. Thine, thine, thro' life, thro' death—one heart, one grave!
I knew thou wouldst return, for I have lived
In thee so utterly, thou couldst not die
And I live still.—The dial needs the sun;
But love reflects the image of the loved,
Tho' every beam be absent!—Thine, all thine!
Lady M. My place is forfeit on thy breast, not his.
[*Pointing to* BEAUFORT.
Clarence, embrace thy brother, and my first-born.
His rights are clear—my love for thee suppressed them—
He may forgive me yet—wilt *thou?*
Beau. Forgive thee!
Oh mother, what is rank to him who hath stood
Banished from out the social pale of men,
Bowed like a slave, and trembling as a felon?
Heaven gives me back mine ermine, innocence;
And my lost dignity of manhood, honour.
I miss nought else.—Room there for me, my brother!
Vyv. Mother, come first!—love is as large as heaven!
Falk. But why so long——
Vyv. What! could I face thee, friend,
Or claim my bride, till I had won back honour?
The fleet had sailed—the foeman was defeated—

And on the earth I laid me down to die.
The prince of England's youth, frank-hearted Essex,
Passed by—— But later I will tell you how
Pity woke question; soldier felt for soldier.
Essex then, nobly envying Drake's renown,
Conceived a scheme, kept secret till our clarions,
Startling the towers of Spain, told earth and time
How England answers the invader. Clarence,
Look—I have won the golden spurs of knighthood!

For worldly gifts, we'll share them—hush, my brother;
Love me, and thy gift is as large as mine.
Fortune stints gold to some; impartial Nature
Shames her in proffering more than gold to all—
Joy in the sunshine, beauty on the earth,
And love reflected in the glass of conscience;
Are these so mean? Place grief and guilt beside them,
Decked in a sultan's splendour, and compare!
The world's most royal heritage is his
Who most enjoys, most loves, and most forgives.

THE END.

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Digitized with financial assistance from
Government of Maharashtra
on 30 January, 2020